



# **Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Report**

**FEBRUARY 2004**

# Occupational Safety and Health Report

## February 2004

### Introduction

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for January 2004. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Updates, provides updates on the safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for January 2003, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Three, Survey Results, provides the February results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

### Section One: Program Updates

The quarterly meeting of the Department's Safety and Occupational Health Council was held on January 8, 2004, with Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration, Mr. Otto Wolff, presiding. Deborah Jefferson, Director of Human Resources Management, requested that everyone continue to focus on our customers and the services we provide by

- developing a strong safety and health foundation through new and updated policies,
- leveraging our resources,
- standardizing DOC safety and health processes,
- reaching out to our employees through safety and health awareness; and
- training and mentoring our safety and health staff.

Dr. Hartman Director, Office of Safety and Occupational Health, updated the group on the four objectives of the "The Way Ahead:"

- Policy and guidance: OOSH will revitalize the OOSH monthly meetings to develop departmental goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and trackable. The bureaus and operating units will be more participative in the OSH council and departmental products, such as, the DOC OSH monthly report. Additionally, Departmental Administrative Orders (DAO) 209-3, *Accident Investigation and Incident Reporting*, and DAO 202-810, *Workers' Compensation for Federal Employees* are being reviewed and updated.
- Leverage Resources: OOSH is currently working with DOC contracting officers to

expand the existing Health Unit contract to address long-term workers' compensation cases. He also stated that OOSH is working with the DOC Office of Acquisition Management to ensure the DOC Health Unit Physician will act as the Department's representative to reconcile new OWCP cases to help reduce workers' compensation costs.

- OSH Standardization: Currently DOC is working with the Department of Labor to utilize their Safety and Health Information Management System (SHIMS), which should expedite workers' compensation claims, reduce reporting requirements, and standardize incident reporting throughout the department.
- OSH Training and Awareness: Ms. Prather-Nichols addressed a DOC awareness issue regarding a perception of diminished safety and health improvements identified by employees through the OOSH website. The Council determined that a working group will be chartered to identify, and track deficiencies and develop improvements. The group met February 12, 2004, at the Herbert C. Hoover Building (HCHB) in room 5201. Section Three of this report describes meeting outcomes. Additionally, Ms. Prather-Nichols stated the Department would be hosting an OSHA 600, *Collateral Duty Safety Training*, class with tentative date for April 6-9, 2004.

"The Way Ahead" will not be an easy path...but through steady, continuous, improvements and with the commitment and leadership of our safety and health professionals, all DOC employees will be afforded a safe and healthful workplace. To view the OSH Council slide presentation and meeting minutes click on <http://ohrm.doc.gov/safetyprogram/Councilmeetingminutes.htm> and <http://ohrm.doc.gov/safetyprogram/Councilpresentation.htm>.

### **Section Two: Injury Statistics and Analysis**

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past five years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects statistics through January 2004. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

**Incidence Rate:** The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH} (200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year <sup>1</sup>
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

<sup>1</sup> The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records on all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

**Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.**

Chart 1

Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)

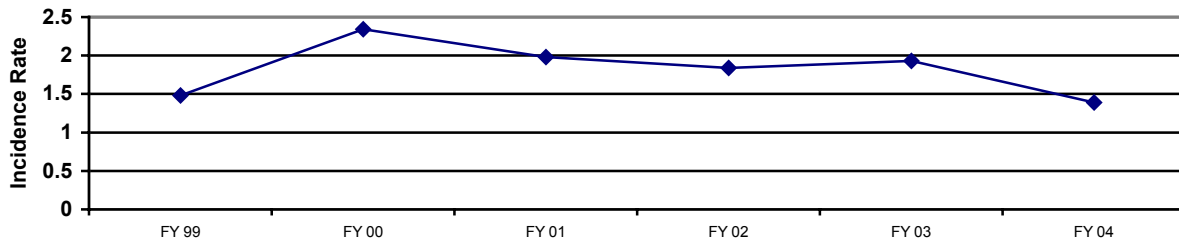
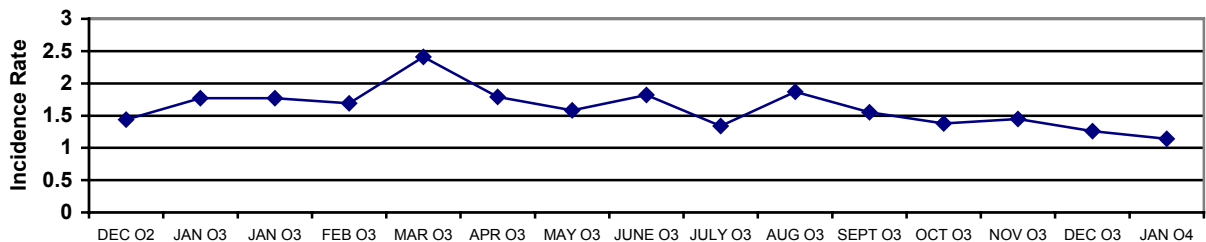


Chart 2

Monthly for Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)



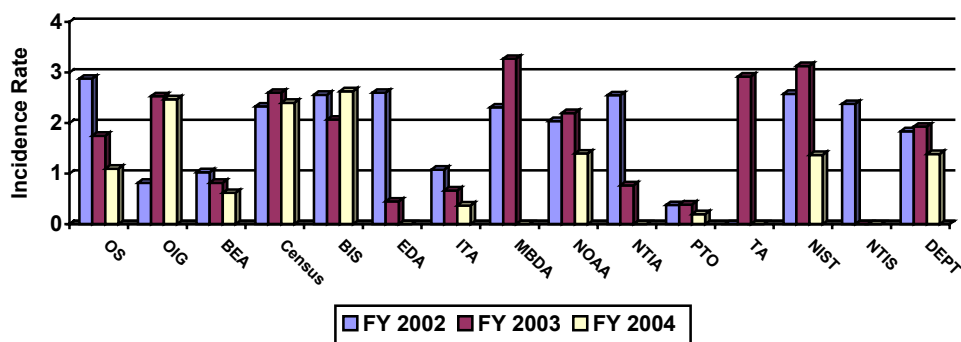
Major Findings include:

- **The FY 2004 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is down from the rate for FY 2003 and FY 2002.** The TCIR is 1.39 (see Chart 1) for FY 2004, 1.93 for FY 2003, and 1.84 for FY 2002. A total of 157 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2004 (see Table 1).
- **All of the larger bureaus (with more than 500 employees) to include the Bureau of Census and The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had lower TCIRs to date for FY 2004 when compared to FY 2003 (see Chart 3).**
- **Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), only five injuries were reported to date in FY 2004.**

- **The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years. The TRCIRs for Commerce are 1.06 for FY 2004, 1.48 for FY 2003 and 1.60 for FY 2002 (see Table 1A).**

Chart 3

**Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)**

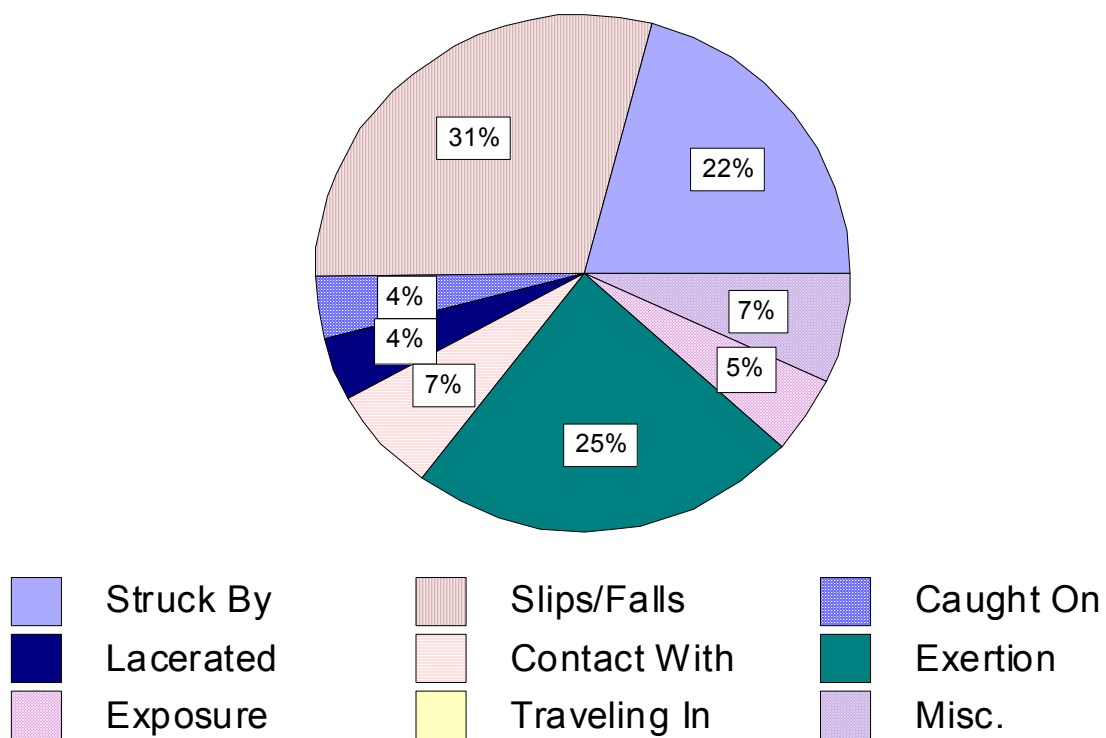


**Types of Injuries:** Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses continues to be essential. Evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents can assist in the mitigation of injuries and illnesses. Information on types of injuries is provided in Charts 4 and 5 and Tables 2 and 2A.

- **“Struck By” injuries accounted for 22 percent of those reported in FY 2003 (see Chart 4) and 28 percent in January 2004.** Most of the struck by injuries were caused by objects in the workplace not being used correctly. Employees should be careful when using equipment around fellow employees.
- **“Slips/Fallls” injuries accounted for 31 percent of all injuries in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). The numbers have decreased from 45 percent last month, December 2003, to 28 percent of injuries reported in January 2004 (see Chart 5).** Most slips and falls occurred on walking surfaces. Ice on sidewalks and parking lots and melted ice in the entrances and hallways accounted for over half of all slips/falls in January 2004. Employees should use caution and be attentive to the condition of walking surfaces.

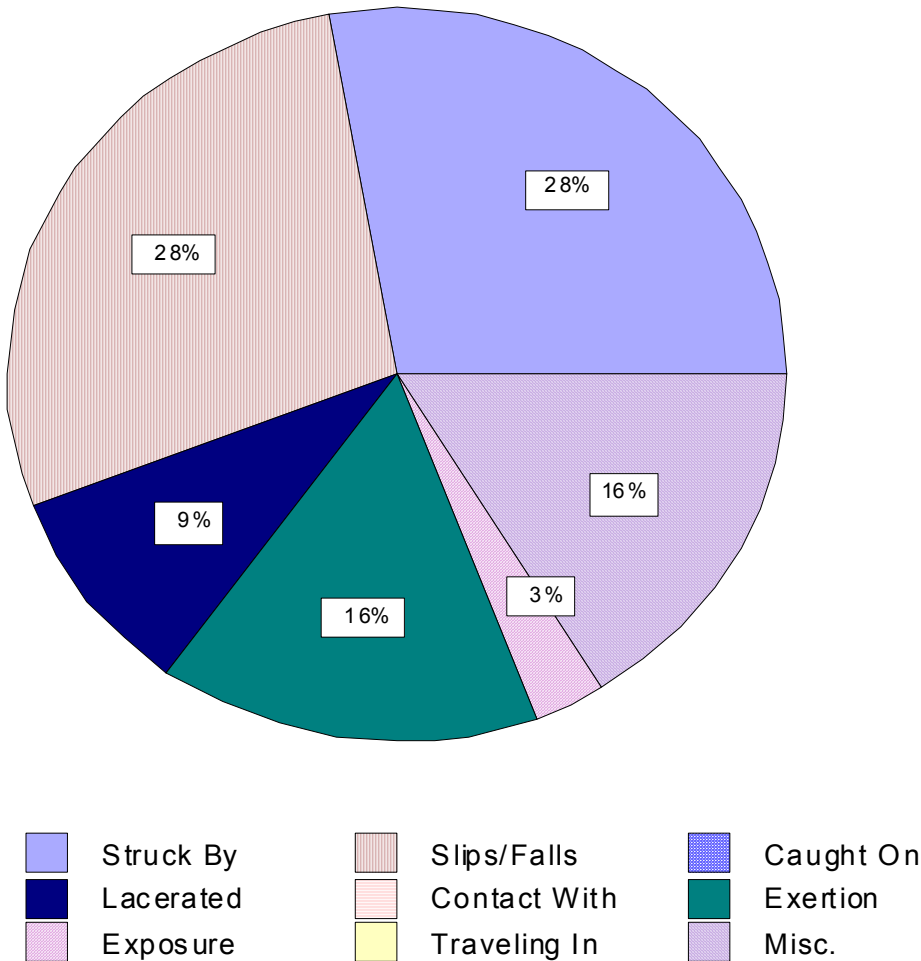
- **“Exertion” injuries accounted for 25 percent of all injuries in the Department for FY 2003. In December “exertion” injuries accounted for only 10 percent of all monthly injuries, however, in January 2004 the Department has realized a six percent increase to 16 percent.** Lifting and moving heavy objects continue to account for most of all exertion injuries. Again, we request that employees use a cart to move heavy objects and/or seek the assistance of Departmental movers.

**Chart 4**  
**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for FY 2003**



**Chart 5**  
**Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries**

**JANUARY 04**





**TABLE 1**  
**TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TCIR)**

Bureau	FY1999		FY2000		FY2001		FY2002		FY2003		December 2003		January 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	14	1.75	0	0	1	1.46	3	1.10
Office of Inspector General	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	2.47
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	4	0.82	0	0	0	0	1	0.62
Bureau of the Census	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	252	2.60	18	2.25	16	1.97	78	2.40
Bureau of Industry and Security	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	7	2.07	0	0	1	3.50	3	2.63
Economic Development Administration	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	1	0.45	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	11	0.67	1	0.73	1	0.74	2	0.37
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	3	3.27	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	246	2.20	9	0.97	11	1.19	52	1.40
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	2	0.40	0	0	4	0.20
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	90	3.13	5	2.11	2	0.84	13	1.37
National Technical Information Service	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1.26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>1.39</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

\* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

**TABLE 1A**  
**TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE\* (TRCIR)**

Bureau	FY1999		FY 2000		FY2001		FY 2002		FY2003		December 2003		January 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	12	1.50	0	0	1	1.46	3	1.10
Office of Inspector General	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	2.47
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	3	0.62	0	0	0	0	1	0.62
Bureau of the Census	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	184	1.90	11	1.37	14	1.73	58	1.79
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	7	2.07	0	0	1	3.50	2	1.75
Economic Development Administration	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
International Trade Administration	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	11	0.67	0	0	1	0.74	1	0.18
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	2	2.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	196	1.75	7	0.76	8	0.86	44	1.19
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	2	0.40	0	0	2	0.10
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	58	2.01	4	1.69	2	0.84	7	0.74
National Technical Information Service	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>2.13</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>1.72</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1.06</b>
<b>Decennial Census 2000</b>	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

\* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

\*\* Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

**Table 2**

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU  
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES  
(Through January 2004)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	29	55	21	27	45	21	8	26	4	4	5	3	1	3	0	2	3	0	257
Falls/Slips	59	59	7	96	96	28	22	21	4	7	12	0	7	6	0	2	2	2	430
Caught On An Object	5	12	2	8	3	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	42
Cuts/Bites	26	5	0	19	19	6	9	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	90
Contact With An Object	19	5	0	11	5	1	6	0	0	6	4	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	61
Exertion/ Motion	64	73	14	37	51	18	17	22	2	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	8	1	315
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	9	9	0	6	18	2	3	3	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	12	0	0	70
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	10	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Miscellaneous*	7	22	8	21	10	2	8	8	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1386</b>

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

\*\* Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

**Table 2A**  
**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU**  
**AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES**  
**(Through January 2004)**

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	9
Falls/Slips	0	1	0	2	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	1	19
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	5
Exertion/ Motion	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	14
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Miscellaneous*	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
Total	1	3	1	4	4	1	6	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	6	2	0	2	3	0	9	7	3	58

\* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

### Section Three: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety and Health Survey website. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The website can be accessed through the OHRM homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

#### *Safety Survey Statistics*

We received 47 responses to January's survey. The following tables provide some data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions. The occupational safety and health survey provides feedback from the DOC community we serve and provides an additional insight on whether or not Departmental occupational safety and health programs and initiatives are active.

**Table 3a  
Safety Survey  
February Results**

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	37	80.43%
Yes	9	19.57%

**Table 3b  
Safety Survey  
February Results**

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Count	Percent
No	25	54.35%
Yes	21	45.65%

Table 3b indicates the continued perception that there is a lack of safety improvements within the Department. Over 54.35% of these concerns are associated with the Department's four major bureaus NOAA, CENSUS, PTO and NIST respectively (see Table 3d).

On February 12, 2004, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Survey working group (NOAA, Census, PTO and ITA) met as mandated at the January OSH Council to better measure Departmental OSH customer service. The group delivered a modified and improved survey and a methodology to better follow-up on employee safety and health concerns. In line with the OHRM vision to be customer focused and provide value, one of the five questions is: Do you think your safety and health office provides value to your operational objectives, if not why?

**Table 3c**  
**Safety Survey**  
**February Results by Geographic Area**

Geographical Location		
State	Count	Percent
CA	3	6.38%
DC	4	8.51%
IA	1	2.13%
ID	1	2.13%
IN	6	12.77%
MD	22	46.81%
MI	2	4.26%
NY	1	2.13%
PA	1	2.13%
TX	1	2.13%
VA	4	8.51%
WA	1	2.13%

**Table 3d**  
**Safety Survey**  
**November Results by Bureau/Agency**

Bureau Breakdown		
Answer	Count	Percent
CENSUS	22	46.81%
ITA	2	4.26%
NIST	6	12.77%
NOAA	13	27.66%
OS	1	2.13%
PTO	3	6.38%